

PERSPEKTIVEN

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Spring 2003

Singing Brings Joy for Milwaukee Liederkrantz

Concert, Celebration mark 125th Anniversary of German Chorus



Rolf Hoffmann

By Helga Nikolic

Singen macht Freude" - singing brings joy - a motto of one of Wisconsin's five active male German choruses, aptly sets the tone for the existence of any of these groups, and underscores their purpose: to uphold the German language and customs through music.

In the Milwaukee area, three of these groups have celebrated more than a century of musical tradition: the Milwaukee Liedertafel, 145 years, the Milwaukee Liederkrantz, 125 years, and Schwaben Maennerchor, 105 years.

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To mark the 125th anniversary, Milwaukee Liederkrantz will perform in concert at 7 p.m. Saturday, April 26 at Mount Mary College Theater.

According to Rolf Hoffmann, a past president of the Liederkrantz as well as past president of the United German Choruses of Milwaukee and the Wisconsin Saengerbezirk, the Liederkrantz has fulfilled the dream of the original members back in 1878: to keep the German love of song alive, to improve the quality of male singing through the creation of a singing society - and to have fun doing it!

Started With 20 Men

That initial group of 20 men built a clubhouse, but had to give it up to make room for what became the Milwaukee Auditorium. Captain Frederick Pabst then invited them to meet at the Forstkeller, which they did until prohibition kicked in in 1920. Then they had to move to a speakeasy on Front Street (on the Safe House site) because "singing needs liquid to keep the throat clean," recalled Hoffmann. When Prohibition was repealed in 1933, they moved back to the Forstkeller. They have been meeting and singing every Thursday since 1972 at the Latvian Hall at N. 89th Street and W. Lynx Avenue on Milwaukee's far northwest side.

Hoffmann joined the chorus in 1945 and is the only member to be on its board for the 75th, 100th and, now, the 125th anniversaries. He is the 2nd bass Stimmfuehrer (section leader) in the chorus and serves as the current 3rd vice president of the North American Saengerbund (singers association). In the 58 years of his singing, he has seen fluctuations in membership, but the primary focus on the joy of singing together and the

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**GOETHE INSTITUT
INTER NATIONES**

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Goethe House of Wisconsin is a non-profit German-American cultural institute serving Wisconsin since 1958. Our mission is to serve as a statewide resource for information about the past and present culture of all German-speaking people - especially those in the Federal Republic of Germany. Goethe House of Wisconsin invites the financial support of individuals, companies and organizations who share our mission and recognize the value of this important cultural exchange. Goethe House of Wisconsin is a not-for-profit (501)(c)(3) organization. Donations are tax deductible as the law allows.

Goethe House Kinder Kamps

**June 16-27, 2003 and July 14-25, 2003
and July 21-August 1, 2003**

German Immersion Day Camps for children ages 3-11. Sing-Dance-Create-Speak German! For all ability levels, Mondays-Fridays from 9 a.m. to noon.

**Call Goethe House at (414) 276-7435
for more information.**

Sites are as follows: Carroll College in Waukesha, Prairie Hill Waldorf School in Pewaukee, Milwaukee Kickers, and other sites to be confirmed.

From the President

You may have read an article in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel about Spanish language classes limiting options to students who want to study other languages: i.e. German and French. The message of the article is no new development. What precipitated its content was the elimination of a teaching position in the North Lake School District of Waukesha County dedicated to German and French. As soon as we at Goethe House became aware of the threat to the German and French programs, we contacted the district and offered to assist in any way to retain the offering of German language classes. As of this writing, we do not know the results of our sincere gesture of assistance.

What is important for all of you to know, is our firm intent to prevent the continuing effort to diminish the value of offering German in middle and high school settings. In today's international cultural, artistic and commercial world, the upward mobility influence of the German language in a young student's development process is too valuable to be ignored. It would be the tragedy of our educational times to allow this trend to go unabated. More on this later

ALLES GUTE,

ALLES GOETHE

Ted E. Wedemeyer Jr.

Think Spring and Goethe House's Kinder Kamps

By Katharina Hren
Executive Director

Es frühlingt!

It's almost Kinder Kamp time again! I've busily been confirming sites in the greater Waukesha and Milwaukee areas. It looks like we will be holding summer sessions again in Pewaukee at the Prairie Hill Waldorf School, in Waukesha at Carroll College, in Milwaukee at the Milwaukee Kickers soccer club, and perhaps on Milwaukee's East Side.

It's time to start telling your grandchildren, nieces and nephews, and your children about the Spass (means fun) they can be having in German this summer!! Our hope is that we might light a candle of enthusiasm in each child...so that they might have more conduits of communication as they grow older and become more aware of the world around them.

We also have been seeking to serve communities whose schools are losing German programs due to major budget cuts. Our goal will be to begin offering after

school programs for the next school year. If you know of a community which could benefit from such a program, please let us know!

This spring we will be offering another session of adult German classes to begin in mid-April. Our Saturday children's program for children ages 0 - 6 will continue until June 1st. Don't forget to check out our Kultur Cafe on the third Saturday each month...and bring your Brot!

We need volunteers for German Fest July 25-27 more than ever this year, so please contact us as soon as possible if you are interested! We will be manning the following areas: Computer Test Tent, Genealogy, our Goethe House booth in the Cultural Area, and perhaps bottled water stands. Please be aware that any hours volunteers work at German Fest are paid to Goethe House at the end of the year.

So...meld' dich einfach by calling Goethe House with any interest in any of the above items and/or any questions!

Eure Katharina

LEAVE
A
GERMAN LEGACY



Professor
Umlaut

On behalf of
Goethe House
of Wisconsin,
I cordially...

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in order to guarantee its success and
service to future generations.

For more information on supporting
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Make German culture live today and tomorrow.

125th Anniversary for Milwaukee Liederkrantz

[Music, from Page 1]

the social aspect of enjoying each other's company in the framework of German tradition has not changed.

German Immigrants First

Initially, the chorus, as did all male choruses, attracted German immigrants who wanted to preserve their heritage through German folk music. The list of 20 founding members grew through the years to close to 100 singers at the 100th anniversary. Membership is currently at a low point of 38 singers, most of whom know no German, but love the music and learn the language as a by product!

The youngest singer in the group is 28 and the oldest is 92, but there is no generation gap here. Music bridges the ages, and new singers are always welcome, but being German is not a prerequisite.

Illustrious History for Liederkrantz

The Liederkrantz has an illustrious history of quality singing and performances. Seven directors have led the chorus since its inception; Timothy Wurgler is the current leader.

Every March, they compete in a statewide competitive singing contest, and they are regularly among the top three (with Harmonia of Kenosha and the Madison Maennerchor) out of eight choruses competing, having won the top trophy nine times. They plan to present more performances to further sharpen their skills, but also to make the public aware of their existence.

Asked about the future of German singing societies, Hoffmann had no doubt they would continue. While his involvement is with the male chorus, he said the mixed choruses, like Concordia of Sheboygan (founded in 1860) and D.A.N.K. Folksingers of Milwaukee, perpetuated another facet of German choral tradition. Within the last 10 years, the Wisconsin Saengerbezik (the state group for singing societies) also included the German-American Kinderchor of Milwaukee, which has since disbanded. The fastest growing group, however, is the Milwaukee Damenchor (Ladies' Chorus), said Hoffmann, in existence for 15 years and still growing. If the male choruses struggle with their membership, Hoffmann felt that some might merge, so that the active five might turn into a stronger group of three in the future.

Plan Memorable Year

Meanwhile, preparations are underway to make the 125th anniversary year of the Liederkrantz a memorable one. The Stiftungsfest was held on February 1 with a dinner and awards and recognitions.

The Milwaukee Liederkrantz 125th anniversary concert and celebration will be held at 7 p.m. Saturday, April 26, at Mount Mary College. Enter the parking lot on N. 92nd Street just south of Burleigh Street. A reception following the concert will feature live music from the Sterne der Heimat band.

Admission is \$10 at the door and \$7.50 in advance. To order advance tickets send a check and a self-addressed stamped envelope to:

Edward Langer
11430 W. Woodside Drive
Hales Corners, WI 53139

Hoffmann said they have tried to contact as many former members as they could locate to come and sing with them for the anniversary concert at 7 p.m. Saturday, April 26, at the Mount Mary College Theater.

Several of the musical selections on the program are songs composed by former directors, dating back to the 1880s. While the music is generally German, they will also include songs in English, Latin, Croatian and Russian.

The concept of male choruses is a tradition that has withstood the test of time. The Milwaukee Liederkrantz, through its 125 years, has perpetuated the "Singen macht Freude" motto, through their performances and their social activities.

National Honor for Pustejovsky

John Pustejovsky, a director of Goethe House of Wisconsin, is among 30 educators selected nationally to participate in a leadership program for teachers of German, funded by the German government.

Pustejovsky, of Whitefish Bay, is an associate professor of German at Marquette University. He was selected by the American Association of Teachers of German in cooperation with the Goethe-Institut for the TraiNDaf program, which aims to build future leaders in the field of German instruction.

Pustejovsky will attend a Washington, D.C. orientation this spring and take part in seminars this summer in Germany. He also will attend the AATG annual meeting in Philadelphia in November.

Concordia University Wisconsin-the 21st Century

In the last edition of PERSPEKTIVEN, we told the story of the struggles of 19th century German Lutherans to initiate a school which would begin the education of pre-ministerial students. Concordia College came into existence in 1881 on the west side of Milwaukee. That school now is Concordia University Wisconsin, a premier educational institution for 21st century men and women.

By Gus Azinger

By the mid 1960s, several not-so-subtle changes began to take place on the Concordia College campus, which then was taking up a major chunk of real estate on the west side of Milwaukee in and around the area of N. 33rd Street between Kilbourn Avenue and State Street.

Two girls were enrolled in the Fall of 1965. Some old timers referred to that event simply as the Fall.

German becomes an elective

Up until that time courses were required; there were no electives. Two-year college students began to show up on the rosters. By 1969, the high school years began to phase out. No new high school freshmen were enrolled in 1970 and by 1975 the last of six-year boys left the Concordia College campus. It was during these years



Walter W. Stuenkel
Concordia President
1953-1977

that the unthinkable became fact: the classical languages, including the study of German, became electives.

Dr. Walter Stuenkel took over the reins of the school in 1953. All the college's presidents had borne the

nickname "Prexy." But it was Stuenkel who was most closely identified with that name. He was energetic and enthusiastic, a man of considerable vision. He had been asked and readily agreed to become a director of neighboring educational institution Spencerian College, a private business-oriented school. A consortium was formed and this alliance saw some Spencerian students taking Concordia courses and some Concordia students were found taking business courses at Spencerian.

Spencerian College fails

But when the business school failed in 1974, the Missouri Synod's board for higher education voted to help Spencerian's students complete the four-year education they expected to achieve when they originally enrolled there. Spencerian students were absorbed into the college's population and the study of business became an integral part of Concordia's disciplines.



The Concordia University Wisconsin campus
on the shore of Lake Michigan,
Mequon, Wisconsin

As a two-year, coed college, Concordia was in a definite growth phase.

"Prexy" Stuenkel became of mandatory
[Please turn to Concordia, Page 6]

Concordia University Wisconsin-the 21st Century

[Concordia, from Page 5]

retirement age and left Concordia at the end of the 1976-'77 school year. But the decision to enlarge the school to a four-year status was on an inexorable track.

Appointed to the presidency in 1977 was Dr. Wilbert Rosin. It was during his tenure, in 1978 to be exact, that the college was given the green light to go four years, a decision which was momentous in the school's history.



R. John Buuck
Concordia President
1979-1997

Rosin's stint as president of Concordia was, however, very short. He left in 1979 to become dean of the faculty at the Missouri Synod's second seminary at Fort Wayne, Indiana. His successor was Dr. R. John Buuck, another dynamo in the style of "Prexy" Stuenkel.

About this time opposition from neighborhood residents and business interests to Concordia's "grand plan" for growth began to mount. The proposed changes were just too much for these folks. And into this stepped the new president, Buuck.

Coincidentally, very shortly later, out in Mequon, the School Sisters of Notre Dame began to "shop around" their exquisite campus on the Lake Michigan shore that included Caroline Academy.

The religious order of Catholic nuns wanted someone in Christian education to occupy their beautiful buildings and lakefront campus.

After conferring with local lay leaders and faculty advisers, Buuck took his case to St. Louis. It didn't take the Board for Higher Education long to realize just how generous the religious order of nuns was in the asking

price. The deal was done, all the necessary protocols observed and the last class graduated from the west side Milwaukee campus in 1982.

The study of German is still very much on the list of courses at Concordia University Wisconsin, the new name for the distinguished old school. The language is being pursued both as a major and a minor. Those students who avail themselves of these courses are found in pre-seminary, education and business disciplines.

In 1992, a Milwaukee couple, Henry and Lucille Hett, funded a state-of-the-art language lab for the school which provides today's students with dramatic new technology utilized in their studies of German as well as Spanish. So, Concordia's German studies are alive and well and flourishing under the direction of Dr. Doreen Krueger, herself a member of Goethe House of Wisconsin.

There is obviously no neglect of the university's German heritage, judging by the names found adorning the numerous wings or halls of the institution.

Luther Hall houses the administration offices of the school. Then there are Albrecht Hall, Barth Hall, Rincker Hall, Stuenkel Hall, Katherine Hall (named after Mrs. Martin Luther), Siebert Hall, Augsburg Hall, Coburg Hall, Heidelberg Hall, Wittenberg Hall, Wartburg Hall and finally, the Buuck Fieldhouse.



Patrick Ferry
Concordia President
1997 -

The eighth president of Concordia was inaugurated in 1997, the first "Prexy" to bear a non-German name. Dr. Patrick Ferry now heads a full-fledged university with multiple campuses, thousands of students, a large, top-quality faculty and staff, and an increased interest in and a profound impact on the larger communities it serves.

Eugene Von Bruenchenhein, Obsessive Visionary

By Ruth DeYoung Kohler

For over forty years, Eugene Von Bruenchenhein devoted himself to making art. At the time of his death on January 24, 1983, his body of works had grown to literally thousands of objects, including a fantastic assortment of paintings, sculpture, ceramics, photography, poetry, theoretical writings, and musical instruments. Although Von Bruenchenhein possessed no formal training and received no recognition during his lifetime, few other individuals have created works of such power and originality.

The book, *"Eugene Von Bruenchenhein, Obsessive Visionary,"* is one facet of an extensive effort by the John Michael Kohler Arts Center to record and preserve the legacy of this extraordinary self-taught artist.

West Side Home a Treasure

Our involvement with Von Bruenchenhein's work began in February 1983 when Milwaukee Art Museum Curator of Education Barbara Brown Lee described to me two magical chicken-bone chairs that policeman Dan Nycz had brought to the museum. Nycz had asked if the tiny sculptures had value, for he hoped that their sale might help the artist's impoverished widow Marie. That evening Russell Bowman, then chief curator and now director of the museum, took me to the Von Bruenchenhein home on the west side of Milwaukee.

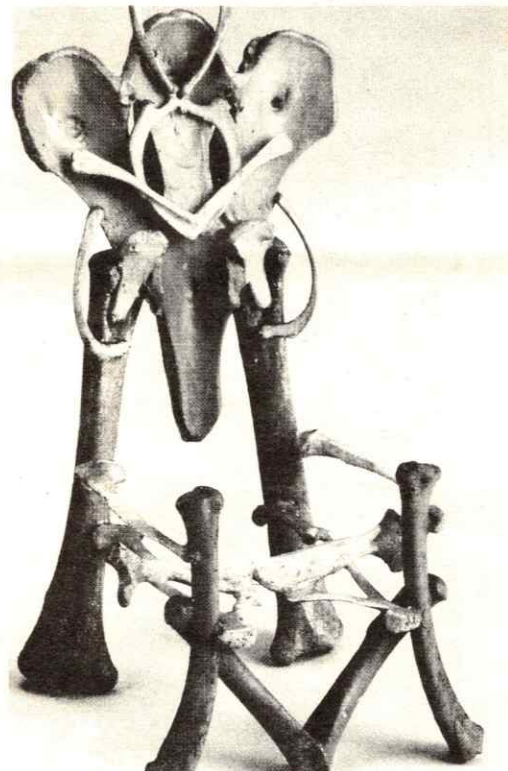
I was unprepared for what I saw. Large concrete masks stood guard in the moonlit snow around the pink, turquoise, and yellow painted house. Inside, Von Bruenchenhein's prodigious body of works spilled out of every room from basement to attic. The intensity of his vision was awesome. Then and there, the preservation, documentation, and exposure of this extraordinary artist's work became an imperative mission for the John Michael Kohler Arts Center.

Months Needed to Shape Art Project

The next six months were spent working with the artist's family and legal representative to shape the project. In September 1983, the John Michael Kohler Arts Center staff transported Von Bruenchenhein's entire oeuvre to the arts center, where both staff and trained volunteers spent hundreds and hundreds of hours carefully cataloguing and photographing each piece. This documentation has become, in turn, the basis for a permanent archive on the artist at the arts center.

"...discover, research, restore and collect the work of self-taught artists."

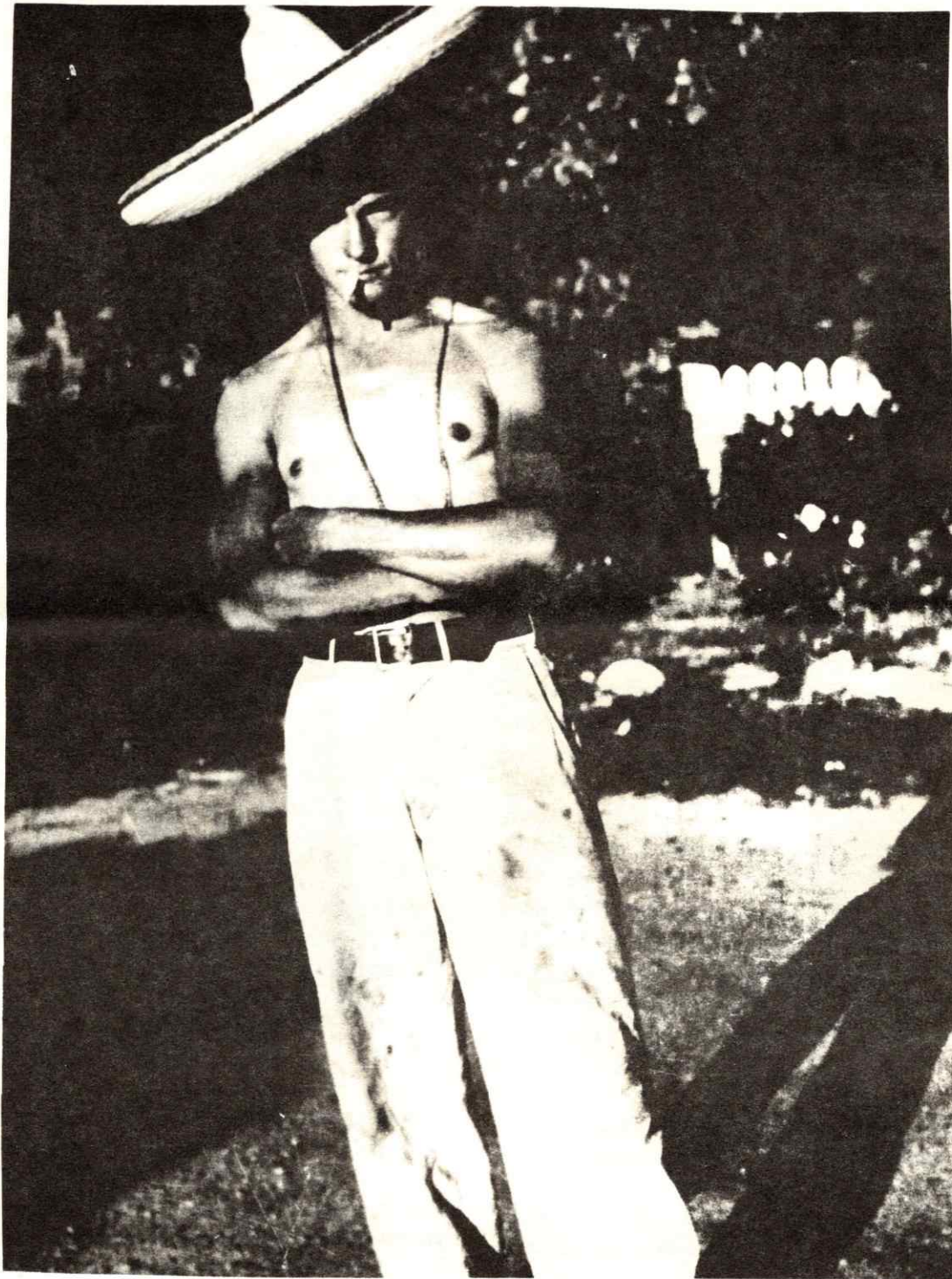
Herbert Kohler Jr. on a major initiative of the John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan.



Bone Chair, late 1960s

In March of 1984, the Arts Center presented over two hundred and fifty objects in the first major retrospective exhibition of Von Bruenchenhein's work. Both public and critical response were overwhelming. Shortly afterward, a special grant enabled the Arts Center to purchase a representative selection of works to be preserved together and exhibited throughout the country during upcoming years.

Artist Von Bruenchenhein Snaps a Striking Pose



Photograph of artist Eugene Von Bruenchenhein - 1938

Eugene Von Bruenchenhein, Obsessive Visionary

Eugene Von Bruenchenhein

Freelance Artist

Poet and Sculptor

Inovator

Arrow maker and Plant man

Bone artifacts constructor

Photographer and Architect

Philosopher

Self-proclamation on a plaque found in the kitchen of Eugene Von Bruenchenhein's home

By Joanne Cubbs

Eugene Von Bruenchenhein was described by others as a small man given to introspection who also loved polka music and white cats.

He was born in 1910 in Marinette, Wisconsin, the second of three sons. In later years, Von Bruenchenhein would attach special significance to the fact that he was born in the same year that Halley's comet visited the earth. His miraculous recovery at the age of eight, after a pronouncement that he had died from the flu, was, for him, another sign that he was an individual of special destiny.

Stepmother a Mentor

While Eugene was still a young boy, his family moved to Green Bay and later to Milwaukee where he attended grade school and the first few years of high school. His father Edward was a sign painter and storekeeper who satisfied his yearning for travel by taking the family on extended sojourns to Colorado and Texas in the 1920s. His natural mother Clara died in 1917. Shortly afterward, his father married Elizabeth Mosley, a learned woman who taught school in Panama before returning to the United States to become a chiropractor. Referred to as "Bessie," the artist's stepmother painted floral lifes and authored several treatises on evolution and reincarnation. In 1926, she published a small pamphlet titled "Evolution: The Law of Progress Based on Truth," which set forth a plan for the "higher development of civilization." Throughout the years until her death in 1938, Eugene regarded her as his mentor.

Family Settles in Milwaukee

In the 1930s, the Von Bruenchenhein family built a home in Milwaukee and began to operate a small grocery store out in the front. It was to this modest house that Eugene would eventually return to live with his wife Marie. During the late 1930s and early 1940s, Von Bruenchenhein built a greenhouse in the backyard and



Photograph of artist's wife, Marie, 1940s

began to collect an assortment of cacti and other exotic plants. He also joined the Milwaukee Cactus Club, took a job with a local florist, studied books on botany, and, for a time, referred to himself as a "horticulturist."

In 1944, one year after marrying Marie, Eugene found employment in a large local bakery where he continued to work until health difficulties and the closing of the company prompted his early retirement in 1959.

Despite the seemingly ordinary facts of his day-to-day existence, Von Bruenchenhein's life was far from conventional. It held a surprising secret. Unbeknown to all but a few relatives and friends, Von Bruenchenhein was, throughout his life, an artist who passionately pursued his vocation during evening hours and late into the night.

The John Michael Kohler Arts Center, 608 New York Avenue, Sheboygan, is open to the public free of charge every day of the week.

**Regular gallery and retail shop hours are:
Monday, Wednesday and Friday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Tuesday and Thursday 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

Authors Ruth DeYoung Kohler and Joanne Cubbs are director and curator of exhibitions, respectively, at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center.

Goethe the Greatest Figure in German Literature



Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Goethe House of Wisconsin - named for Johann Wolfgang von Goethe - is a German-American program to preserve and expand the cultural heritage of German speakers and their descendants. Why make Johann Wolfgang von Goethe the icon?

He is described as the greatest figure in German literature, a dramatist, lyric poet, novelist and philosopher. He is to Germany what Shakespeare is to England and Dante is to Italy.

Goethe's personality is revealed everywhere in his writings, and many readers have found Goethe himself to be even more fascinating than the characters he created in his stories and poems.

Inherits zest for life, lively imagination

Goethe was born in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, on Aug. 28, 1749. His father was a lawyer and state councillor. His mother was only 18 when Goethe was born. She once said, "My Wolf and I were children together." Goethe inherited his zest for life and his lively imagination from her. From his methodical father he got steadiness of purpose. These two strains of inherited traits helped him find the "golden mean" in his life and in his writing.

When Goethe was 16 he entered the University of Leipzig as a law student. He completed his studies at the University of Strasbourg and was awarded a doctor of laws degree in 1771. The critic, Johann Gottfried von Herder, introduced him to old German folk tales and to the best of English literature in German translation.

Goethe returned to Frankfurt to practice law but turned to writing almost at once. In 1773 his drama "Goetz von Berlichingen" was published; the following year he wrote "The Sorrows of Young Werther". Both works were strongly influenced by the *Sturm und Drang* (Storm and Stress) literary movement that was sweeping Germany. "Werther" made Goethe known throughout Europe.

Goethe left for a stay in Italy from 1786 to 1788. Goethe regarded his Italian journey as the most important period in his life. He realized the *Sturm und Drang* school had gone too far, and in the classic art and architecture of Italy he found the order and restraint that guided his work from then on. He became conservative but never reactionary.

Goethe returned to Weimar to live. Because of Goethe, Weimar became the intellectual center of Germany. Many great men came to live in the town. Among them was the poet and dramatist Friedrich Schiller. He and Goethe became close friends and helped each other in their writings. Goethe's fame spread over Europe and to the United States. After meeting him, Napoleon exclaimed, "There is a man!"

Goethe had many romantic attachments, but he did not marry until he was 57. His wife was Christiane Vulpius, whom he met in Rome. She remained apart from Goethe's intellectual life.

"Faust" is Goethe's greatest work

Goethe once said that his poems made up a "great confession." In a sense the dramatic poem "Faust" is a "confession" of his whole life. As a child he learned the story from a puppet play; he wrote the last scene of his "Faust" in old age. For most of his life he held the story in his mind until at last it became an expression of his mature thought and philosophy.

Goethe died in Weimar on March 22, 1832.

Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia (c) 1996

West Bend Art Museum Offers Unique Graduate Art Course

For the first time, a week long course in Wisconsin regional art is being offered. Early Wisconsin Art and Culture from Prehistoric Times Forward to 1950 will be taught at the West Bend Art Museum from June 23-27. Registration forms are available at the West Bend Art Museum, 300 South Sixth Avenue, West Bend, WI 53095 or through the mail or by calling the museum at 262-334-9638 or online at www.wbartmuseum.com. The course syllabus is also available upon request. The three-credit graduate-level course is being offered through the auspices of the Institute for Graduate Studies. The University of St. Thomas will grant continuing education graduate credits. Thomas D. Lidtke, executive director of the West Bend Art Museum, will teach the course.

Goethe House of Wisconsin

We would like to thank our friends who have generously supported us.

Ein herzliches Dankeschön
Ted E. Wedemeyer Jr.

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