



Sheboygan Area Chapter

October Newsletter 2023

Chapter Dinner Oct. 12

Be sure to join chapter members for our October dinner at **Al & Al's Stein Haus, 1502 S. 12th St., Sheboygan.** We will start dinner at 6:00, ½ hour earlier than usual because their kitchen closes at 7:00.

Our program will feature Julianna van Deventer who spent the spring semester of last year studying in Esslingen. She stayed with Frida Eitel's family. Frida spent last fall in Sheboygan, you may recall. Julianna is a junior at North High School and is looking forward to telling us about her exchange experiences.

The menu will include broaster chicken, beef tips, mashed potatoes, stuffing, salad bar, coffee and dessert. **We will also celebrate Donna Webb's 90th birthday.**

The cost of the dinner is \$20.00 per person. **Please mail your checks before the deadline of Oct. 3.** Make checks out to People to People-Sheboygan and mail them to Rich Miesfeld at 2047 Marion Lane, Sheboygan, 53083. **You may also pay using PayPal.** Just enter @PTPISheboygan and tell Rich who is sending the money. It is SO EASY, but PTP does have to pay 3% to accept the money. If you choose, you may want to add a bit to cover that cost.

The board will meet at 5:00 at Al & Al's on Oct. 12, and the social period will begin at 5:30 with dinner served promptly at 6:00.

Coming Events

Oct. 12	Chapter dinner at Al & Al's
Dec. 14	Christmas party; location TBD
January	No meeting
Feb. 8	Dinner meeting; location TBD

A 51-year Friendship

Many of our former exchange students have indicated how the exchange changed their lives, but how many of you realize that Donna Webb was recently visited by her Esslingen exchange student who came to them in 1972? Thomas Diekmann brought his wife, daughter, and granddaughter to



Sheboygan to visit Donna before her 90th birthday, and they stayed here five days. What a tribute to Donna and to our People to People exchange program! The effects of a student exchange can be so long-lasting and can change lives forever. You will see another example of that on page 2, from a Sheboygan student who spent part of 1985 in Esslingen. Stories like these remind us of how important our exchange program is.

PTP This newsletter is produced monthly for members of the People to People Chapter in Sheboygan, WI. Newsletter items should be submitted by the **15th of the month** to aektc42@gmail.com or mailed to Ann Keckonen, 1542 Golf View Dr. E., Sheboygan, WI 53083.

Multiple Reunions

Submitted by Gina Wilsing Davidson

In 1984, Mrs. Ann Keckonen called to tell me I'd been accepted as an exchange student in the People-to-People program. I was elated! My German exchange sister, Martina Duerr, lived with my family for five months that year, and the next year I went to live with hers in Esslingen. Not only were my months in Germany some of the best of my life—as I met new people, became close with the other American students, and traveled extensively, including weekend trips to other German cities and ten days camping in France—but my life was forever changed. The experience of living in a foreign county at such a young age (I turned 17 while I was there) opened my eyes and my heart, made me want to know more about the world, and gave me the opportunity to form friendships that have lasted for decades.

Over the years, I've reunited many times with my host family, both in Germany and in the U.S. My parents have visited my host family in Esslingen, and my host parents have visited us here. I returned to Germany in 1992 while Martina was in college, and together we traveled to visit others who had been in our exchange group. In 1997, Martina flew to Florida to be at my wedding.

The most amazing of all our reunions was in 2018 when my husband and teenage children (15 and 17) visited Esslingen for the first time. The Duerr family still lives in the same house that I lived in. My husband and children sat in the same inviting kitchen I remembered sitting in more than thirty years before. We had an elaborate German breakfast (complete with homemade jam made with fresh berries from Mutti's garden) and sat outside on the same patio where I'd eaten so many wonderful dinners with my host family when I was a young girl.

Martina's sister, Sonja, orchestrated a tour of Esslingen for us. Together with our husbands and children, we climbed up to the "castle" overlooking the vineyards, strolled over the bridge on the Neckar River, took pictures in front of the Altes Rathaus, and of course, stopped at a biergarten.

Before getting to Esslingen, my family stayed with Martina and her husband, Karl, at their home

in Vienna. After Esslingen, we all spent four wonderful days together in Paris.

My children, now 21 and 23, are excited to return to Germany and want to see more of the world. My husband and I are world travelers, too. After nearly four decades, having been an exchange student remains one of the best experiences of my life—one that led to countless other fantastic experiences. Thank you, People-to-People, for making this exchange program possible and for doing so much for so many.

Editor's note: Gina, her mother, and her brother will be joining us at Al & Al's for the October 12th dinner and program. Gina lives in Florida.



These photos are from the 2018 trip to Germany with Gina's whole family.

Applications are due NOW for all of the 2024 exchange programs. Deadline is October 15. Please tell anyone who might be interested that applications are on our website: www.ptpsheboygan.org.