



Sheboygan Area Chapter

November Newsletter 2020

People to People Chapter will survive with your help

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed all of our lives in a big way this year. We are missing our interaction with friends, relatives, and PTP chapter members. We hope you are safe and healthy during this stressful time.

It would be great if this newsletter could announce our next chapter meeting, but sadly, we have no idea when it will be safe to resume our monthly dinners. At the time of this writing, it looks like we will have to wait until Spring at the earliest.

In spite of no meetings and almost no newsletters, we still have to send our membership dues to PTP International for 2021. I hope our current members will be willing to send \$35 per family or \$25 per single membership to our treasurer, Rich Miesfeld, at 2047 Marion Lane, Sheboygan, 53083. If the pandemic has made this a hardship for you, please contact me directly at 920-946-3899 (cell phone).

We will continue to publish a newsletter whenever possible, but in order to do so, Ann has to receive your news. Most of us have nothing going on right now, so there isn't anything to write about. If you have any contact with friends overseas or former exchange students, please send a message to Ann at akeckonen@charter.net.

For a little humor in this not-so-funny time, read Beth's blog post at the end of this newsletter.

I wish all of you a Happy Thanksgiving, and I hope you can concentrate on things for which you are thankful in this very unusual time.

Jon Keckonen, president

Coming events

Sadly, nothing is planned at this time. Stay tuned for hopeful news in 2021.

Exchange Program

While the summer exchange program had to be postponed until next year, we are happy to announce that we do have one 5-month high school exchange going on at this time. Felix Haug arrived from Esslingen on



September 21, and he is currently attending North High School with his exchange partner, Jonah Weinfurter. His host parents are Todd and Lynn



Weinfurter, and they report that the exchange is working out very well. They took Felix to Florida for a weekend in November, so he was able to

experience some wonderful weather before he sees what our Wisconsin winters are like.

PTP This newsletter is produced monthly for members of the Sheboygan, WI People to People Chapter, which is affiliated with People to People International. Newsletter items should be submitted by the **15th of the month** to Ann Keckonen, 1542 Golf View Dr. E., Sheboygan, WI 53083 or by Email to akeckonen@charter.net.

Sad to say goodbye

We lost two chapter members that we know of, and we all offer our sympathy to their families.

Ken Gumm, 77, lost his battle to cancer in July. He was a longtime member of the chapter, and we will miss his presence at our meetings. He was the loving husband of Char, who does so much for our monthly meetings, and he was Carolyn Miesfeld's brother. He was honored



by the Town of Sheboygan Fire Department because he was their chief for 24 years and served with the department for almost 60 years.

The other death was one of our middle school exchange students back in 2016. Sadly, Anna Hoffman, 17, was a senior at Oostburg High School

this year when she passed away on November 2. Anna was a gifted artist, athlete, and dancer, she loved new experiences. She had planned to attend LTC next year to pursue a degree in criminal justice. Her brother and both of her sisters all took part in our PTP exchange programs. Anna's



family has asked that if you wish to honor her memory, please send a donation to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention – Anna Hoffman Memorial Fund. The address is 4301 Wilson Blvd., Suite 200, Arlington, VA 22203.

Let's talk English

The members of the Esslingen Fire Department would like some practice in speaking English. They have reached out to Mayor Vandersteen and People to People to see if a few people would like to visit once a week or so via virtual communication – perhaps zoom calls. If you are interested in participating, please email Jon Keckonen at jkeckonen@charter.net.

PTP Chapter trip for 2021

The chapter trip planned for 2020 had to be cancelled because of the pandemic, but 18 people have agreed to make a similar trip next September. The itinerary will include spending 3 days in each of 3 cities – Rome, Venice, and Florence. It is still possible to add a few more people to the group, so if this trip interests you, please contact Jon Keckonen. The dates are September 18–28. The dates were chosen before we knew that the Ryder Cup would be in Wisconsin that week. If you feel like renting out your house, you could easily pay for your entire trip. 😊

We need a little laugh...



Beth Hejl, PTP exchange student in 1985-86, has been writing a blog since she moved to Germany in 2012. She has written a humorous blog post about getting into her lederhosen. I asked her for permission to share it because we all need something to laugh about during these trying times.

Don't forget to breathe!

I have always liked the look and feel of *Lederhosen*. I don't mean the *kitschig* ones you find in Bavarian tourist shops, but serious *Lederhosen* that are worn for real purposes. However, my son looked darn cute in these (in 1998)!



Many *Jäger* and *Falkner* wear *Lederhosen*, and when M and I went to an outdoor hunter's trade fair a few weeks ago, we found a stand called Only Kumar Leathers. The *Lederhosen* display looked so fabulous, and fit the models perfectly, of course. We passed the booth twice, and I finally inquired about trying on a pair. Kumar sized me up, grabbed a pair, and pointed me into the changing stall. As I went in, he said something to me that sounded like, "If you can't get them zipped, let me know." Uhh, right.

In the changing stall there hung a sheet of instruction in German and in French. It told me, if I can't get the *Lederhosen* past my thighs, to *wackel my Po* and dance around a little. We women have plenty of experience doing this with jeans, so I was undaunted. Suddenly an arm appeared inside the stall attached to another instruction sheet, this one in English. Kumar had overheard M and me speaking English to each other. Nice gesture. A little pulling, a little *wackeling*, a little

more *wackeling*...Ok! I got them up so that my *Po* was in the seat of the pants. However, ain't no way those hosen are closin'.

I stood there undecided and not a little dejected, loving the feel of the leather but knowing these *Lederhosen* would not be going home with me. Kumar inquired from the other side of the curtain, "How's it going?" I told him they're on but won't close. He said, "No, no, we'll get them closed. Come on out!"

Now when I tell you these *Lederhosen* wouldn't close, I don't mean it was close. I mean there's no elastic in that waistband and I had a good 6-7 cm of empty space between the button and the button hole.

I opened the curtain, he told me to hold up my sweatshirt, and he reached over, grabbed the open sides of the waist and said, "No problem." I'm thinking, "YES, Problem!" He told me to suck it in, he wrenched the waistline from left and right until...holy cats. He got them closed. What black magic is this? He told me to zip them up, which I could now do.

Ok, super. Now that I feel and surely look like 10 pounds of potatoes in a 5-pound sack, I start to wonder how long I should wait before I say, "Thanks, but no thanks," wiggle my way out of those pants and flee. Kumar then told me to do 5 knee squats. Are you mad?!?!?! If I even take a step, the snap is going to fly off and take someone's eye out! He told me to trust him and do the squats. I did, and nothing broke. Those seams must be sewn with the devil's sinews.

He told me to sit in the chair. Again, as any woman in tight jeans knows standing is wiser. By now I began to trust that Kumar does, in fact, know what he's doing, so I sat down. Still nothing burst. Interesting. Kumar convinced me that *Lederhosen* have to be tight at first. With wear they mold to your body and shape and end up fitting you like a second skin.

Skipping a bit here, we ordered a pair and they arrived the other day. They came with instructions for putting them on, and this is where it gets funny.

My translation:

So that the *Lederhosen* fit and sit well for the long haul, they need to be tight at first. If you don't get the pants over your butt right away, wiggle your hips side to side, pull your gut in, and hold your breath (just like you do when you try on jeans)!

IMPORTANT: When you've got the *Lederhosen* closed, breathe again! If, when putting them on the first time, you did not break into a sweat, you have not found the right size yet! [*Note: apparently, I found the right size.*] *Lederhosen* will stretch with time in the waist about 2-3

cm and below the waist about 3-5 cm. But only when there is tension!

After you've got the *Lederhosen* on, hold the waist snap and do 4 to 5 knee bends and notice how the leather gives. [*Not feelin' that just yet, Kumar.*] Keep the *Lederhosen* for a while even if you don't yet feel good in them. When they take on your body temperature and stretch a little, that nice feeling will come by itself. [*Still waiting, Kumar.*]

Armed with those instructions, I gave it a whirl. I got them over my *Po* with just a bit of effort. I definitely had to lie flat on the living room floor to let gravity help me get them snapped, hooked, and zipped (another trick with which we women are familiar). Not being a quitter, I eventually succeeded and was even able to get myself off the floor. Knee bends, sitting on the coffee table, walking around, all good. Relaxing on the sofa with a book, not so much.



Hey, they're closed. Gravity be praised.

The second night was more of the same, and I wore them for about an hour including washing the dishes, and walking down the basement stairs to get some wine. The third night it was less of a struggle to get them closed, though I still needed the gravity trick. I'm wearing them now as I sit at my desk typing. And every now and then I do remember to breathe!

I do trust Kumar. These *Lederhosen* are not cheap (good leather never is), and he would not still be in business if he didn't know what he was doing. They're still tight, but there's nothing like the feel of leather and I'm confident I'll eventually be able to wear these *Lederhosen* in public.

M ordered a pair of hunter's *Lederhosen* from a different source at a more reasonable price, and naturally they fit and look great on him. HE doesn't have to lie on the floor to get them closed! According to Kumar and his instructions, though, M's *Lederhosen* are too big. Time will tell, I guess.